THE

FOREST OF ST. BERNARDO.

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By MISS M. HAMILTON.

VOLUME I.

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1806.

THE

FOREST OF ST. BERNARDO.



CHAP. I.

ABOUT the year 17— Mr. Millward arrived from the East Indies, where he had resided near ten years. He had acquired a competent fortune with the greatest honour, and returned to his native country with an unblemished reputation, and a constitution little im-

paired by the climate. A disappointment in love had occasioned his leaving England: early in life he had attached himself to an amiable and beautiful girl, the only daughter of General Roberts, who having a superior match in view, forbad her thinking of Mr. Millward. This was a severe command; but the gentle Emma, accustomed to obey, disputed not her father's will as far as it related to Henry; but neither threats nor persuasions could induce her to give her hand to Sir William Maynard, to whom her father had contracted her without her knowledge or consent.

The General, provoked by her refusal of so advantageous an offer, sent her to a convent situated in Languedoc, and

used such precautions that it was impossible for her to obtain an interview with Henry, or get even a line conveyed to him; and he left England fully convinced that she had voluntarily resigned him, and was in a few weeks to become the wife of Sir William Maynard.

General Roberts seemed almost to have forgotten his once darling daughter: it is true that he twice a year remitted her pension, and a small stipend for clothes and pocket-money; but not one line of inquiry after her health.

This conduct he pursued for nearly ten years: judge then of Emma's surprise, when one morning she was told a person from her father waited in the

 par-

parlour. On going down, she found a decent well-behaved woman in deep mourning, who rose with great respect on her entrance, and presented a letter, which Emma read several times before she could believe the contents.

It informed her that her father had sent the bearer, whose name was Ward, to attend her to England; and that his carriage and servants waited at Dover to convey her to the arms of her truly affectionate and repentant father, who was impatient to embrace her, and to account for his cruel treatment and seeming neglect, which he hoped to convince her arose entirely from necessity. He lamented having so long secluded her from the world, and that he had sepa-

rated

rated two persons formed to make each other happy. He concluded by entreating her to forget the past, and assured her that his whole study in future should be to render her happy.

It is easy to imagine the various sensations this letter excited in the breast of Emma; but joy soon predominated over every other; the thought of being restored to the affections of a father whom she always tenderly loved, in a moment obliterated his past unkindness. She turned to Ward with her accustomed sweetness, and said she was going to acquaint the Lady Abbess with her arrival, and the commands of her father. Ringing the bell, she desired a lay-sister to take care of Ward, and

procure her some refreshments: she added—

"I will send for you to my apartment in the course of an hour, as I have many questions to ask."

The Lady Abbess, though much afflicted at the thoughts of parting with Miss Roberts, whom she fondly loved and had ever treated as a favourite daughter, yet sincerely congratulated her on the return of her father's affections and her being restored to society, which she was every way qualified to adorn.

Emma settled matters with the good Lady Abbess, and fixed her departure

for

for the next morning. She then sent for Mrs. Ward, from whom she learnt that her father resided at Upton Hall in Devonshire, on an estate that had been left him by a distant relation, who had been dead about three weeks: he was a bachelor, very rich, a most worthy, but very eccentric character. Mrs. Ward also gave her to understand that the late Mr. Roberts had never seen the General till a few months before his death, when he sought him out, and was so much pleased with him that he would not suffer him to quit the Hall. Mr. Roberts had left him an estate of ten thousand a year, and a considerable sum of money in the funds; and had recommended his servants, in his will, to the care of the General, who had

behaved in the most liberal manner: those that were old he had settled in comfortable cottages, and allowed them pensions; he told them they were welcome to come to the Hall whenever they chose, but on a Sunday he should always expect them to dine there: the General had retained the younger part of the servants in his service: that herself had been housekeeper to the late Mr. Roberts for some years, and was so happy as to keep her situation. Mrs. Ward concluded her account by saying, the General continued all the charitable institutions founded by her late master.

Emma asked if her father had brought any of his own servants to the Hall,

Hall, and whether he kept Belle-Vue. Ward replied—"Only Mr. James came with the General;" and that she had not heard any mention of Belle-Vue.

The truth was, Mrs. Ward, finding Miss Roberts a total stranger to the deranged state of the General's affairs and embarrassed circumstances previous to his becoming his cousin's heir, thought it prudent to be silent on the subject. Emma mentioned her design of beginning her journey early the next day; but recollecting that Mrs. Ward might be too much fatigued, offered to defer it. Ward thanked her for her kindness, but said she should be sufficiently rested and able to set out as early as she thought proper; that the General was

so impatient to behold her, he had desired they would be as expeditious as possible. It was then fixed they should set off at seven in the morning.

Ward told Emma she had another letter for her; "the General gave it me, Madam, just as I was getting into the chaise, and ordered me to take care of it as there were notes in it: I put it into my trunk as the most secure place; I will fetch it immediately. The General gave me also a letter of recommendation to Monsieur Dessein at Calais, and desired him to furnish me with a handsome travelling chaise, and a steady man to act as a courier, as I was going to fetch his daughter from a convent in Languedoc. And I assure you, Madam,

Monsieur Dessein has obeyed my master's commands; the carriage is an excellent one, and La Fleur is a very civil and well-behaved man, and perfectly understands his business."

Mrs. Ward went in search of La Fleur, whom she found waiting with the trunk below. She told him her Lady had ordered the carriage to be at the convent by seven the next morning; and that if she had any further commands she would let him know.

She took the letter to Emma; who, on opening it, found it contained bank notes to the amount of five hundred pounds; which her father desired her to lay out in replenishing her wardrobe,

and in presents to her friends for their past attention. He added—

"If you wish to engage an attendant, I have no objection to your bringing a French one over; though I would rather you would wait till you arrive in England, and make choice of an English one: but consult your own inclination, which, believe me, in future shall be free from restraint."

The more Emma considered the turn things had taken, the more she was astonished; every thing appeared as a dream, yet it was so pleasant that she did not wish to awake from it. The permission to bring an attendant with her gave her pleasure, as there was an

English

English orphan girl whom she was very fond of; and she determined, with the Abbess's consent, to take her to England. That amiable woman was truly happy so favourable an opportunity offered of placing her young charge in such good hands.

Fanny Edwards had been brought to the convent a few months after Emma's arrival. She was then about six years old, and had been delivered to the Lady Abbess by her father, who was in the last stage of a consumption. He told this truly pious woman his short sad story, which induced her to promise him to protect the child; and that if she lived to grow up, she would, if possible, place her under the protection of an

English

English lady. According to his desire, she had educated Fanny to get her living in a genteel situation; the Abbess was therefore extremely pleased to have it in her power to perform her promise, and to put her little favourite under the protection of one who would watch over her unguarded youth, and by example and precept render her a worthy and useful member of society.

Fanny was called, and told of the sudden alteration in her situation. The poor girl's sensations quite overpowered her; she was some minutes before she could express her thanks to Emma, to whom she was most ardently attached; but the thought of quitting, perhaps for ever, the worthy Superior, who had

been

been more than a mother to her, filled her young heart with the most poignant affliction. At length a flood of tears relieved her; Emma pressed her to her heart, and withdrew. Fanny threw herself at the feet of the Abbess, and would have poured forth her acknowledgments, but her feelings again overcame her, and she could hardly articulate—

"My dearest Madam, must I then be separated from you, quit this sacred abode of peace and innocence?"

The Lady Abbess, who was sensibly affected, raised her; and, tenderly embracing her, said—

"My

"My dear Fanny, child of my adoption, moderate your feelings: in parting with you I give the strongest proof of my affection, as I sacrifice my own comfort to your advantage. In placing you under the protection of my beloved friend, I secure you an asylum where you will be in perfect safety, and I fulfil the promise I made your dying father: he wished you, my dear girl, to be a Protestant; and though you have attended our mode of worship, you are sensible that I have not been unmindful of your parent's injunctions, as my amiable friend, your future mistress and patroness, has instructed you in the theory of that religion you will soon have it in your power to practise. You have long known my sentiments on that

sacred

sacred subject; that the form of worship is not so essential as purity of heart and uprightness of life. My whole conduct has, I hope, proved to you and the seminary I have the honour to govern, that I am no enthusiast, but adhere strictly to the mild precepts of the Gospel, which strongly enjoin universal charity and toleration to all men. Your being under the guidance of so sensible and worthy a mistress renders any further instructions or advice on my part unnecessary: continue, my dear Fanny, in the path you have hitherto trod, and I shall ever retain the affection of a mother for you. Write to me often, and tell me every wish of your heart. Leave me now, my child, I will see you again in the evening. Give orders to Sister Agnes

Agnes to have your things properly packed."

Fanny left the apartment much comforted, and in a great measure resigned to her new situation. Miss Roberts, having given the necessary directions to Ward, joined the community at dinner, who all expressed their sorrow at being deprived so suddenly of their amiable inmate: Emma thanked them, and assured them of her gratitude for the numerous favours conferred on her during her residence with them.

"Believe me," she said, "I feel, severely feel our separation, which nothing could reconcile me to but the thought of seeing my father, and being restored

to

to his affections. Whatever may be my future lot, I shall never forget the worthy friends whose kind attentions and precepts have enabled me to bear with resignation the disappointments of my youth, and to obey without a murmur the will of my father; yes, my beloved friends, your examples have taught me to submit to the wise dispensations of Providence, and have convinced me that a firm reliance on His goodness, and a strict observance of our religious and moral duties, will conduct us through life (however thorny the path) with some degree of happiness. Our good Superior has permitted me the honour of corresponding with her; I shall avail myself of her kindness, by which means

I shall

I shall have the pleasure of hearing frequently of the welfare of my friends."

With difficulty Emma concluded her address to the nuns, as her feelings almost deprived her of the power of articulating, and she was obliged to leave the refectory abruptly.

It was some time before Emma was sufficiently composed to meet the Lady Abbess, with whom she had promised to spend the afternoon. A summons to attend in her apartment roused her: on her entering, that inestimable woman embraced her; and leading Emma to a seat, said—

"Let us not, my beloved friend, embitter the few remaining hours we shall pass together by unavailing regret; I only look on our separation as a temporary one, as I am vain enough to flatter myself that I shall retain a hold in your heart sufficiently strong to induce you to revisit the Abbey of De ——. The recollection of having been obliged to pass the greatest part of your youth in it may excite disgust; but I am certain the inhabitants will be exempt from it, and you will convince us of your unshaken regard by passing a few weeks with us next summer."

Emma assured the good Abbess, that, with her father's permission, which she had no doubt of obtaining, she should avail herself of the kind invitation; they

they then changed the subject, and passed three or four hours in conversation not only amusing but instructive. The bell for vespers obliged them to separate; but it had been agreed to spare themselves the pain of a formal adieu.

Emma hastily bade the Abbess good night, and withdrew to her own apartment, which she determined not to quit till her departure from the Convent. She had fixed seven in the morning, as at that hour the whole community would be at chapel.

Emma sent for Mrs. Ward and Fanny to sup with her, as she did not wish to be alone. Fanny entered in tears; she had just taken leave of the Lady Abbess, who had presented her with ten guineas

for pocket money. Miss Roberts soon dried the tears of her young protegée, by promising her, if she was a good girl, she should accompany her the ensuing year in her intended visit to her first benefactress. Fanny expressed her thanks; at the same time assuring Emma, that she felt herself truly grateful for the honour conferred on her, and thought herself very fortunate by being under such protection.

La Fleur was punctual to the appointed hour, and had every thing properly arranged for the journey. Emma liberally rewarded the lay-sisters, and left a handsome donation to be distributed to the poor.

The travellers took a hasty breakfast. Miss Roberts had only to bid farewell to Sister Agnes, who had constantly attended her, and the Porteress. The tears and prayers of those good creatures distressed her, and she hurried into the carriage, followed by her two attendants.

Poor Fanny's tears flowed afresh, as the Convent gates closed; and, spite of her fortitude, Emma was much affected. For some miles they pursued their journey in silence; at length the fineness of the morning, (it being the middle of May) and the beauty of the prospect roused Emma from her reverie, and she entered into discourse with Ward, whom she found sensible

and

and well educated. Fanny soon recovered her spirits, the novelty of the scene operated like a charm on her young mind; and when they stopped to dine, she was not only reconciled but delighted with the change of her situation.

On the third day they reached Paris, and drove to the Hotel De —— in the Fauxbourg De St. Germains. Fanny's astonishment, and remarks on every thing she saw, amused Miss Roberts; and she wished much to pass a few days in that famous capital, but her impatience to see her father determined her to proceed on her journey without delay. Two days more brought them in safety to the Silver Lion at Calais.

Miss Roberts ordered La Fleur to engage a packet, and let her know when it would sail.

In less than two hours La Fleur returned, and informed his mistress that he had settled with a captain, and had seen every thing put on board necessary for her accommodation; and if the wind continued fair, he would sail by ten the next morning. La Fleur said he would take care and have the baggage on board that evening.

They embarked the next morning, and after a pleasant passage arrived at Dover the same evening. The first person Emma distinguished on her landing was James, who had for some days

taken

taken his station on the pier, in hopes of seeing the vessel that contained his beloved mistress. The poor fellow was overjoyed to see her.

"Ah, Madam!" he exclaimed, "have I lived to see the happy day that brings you back to good Old England? and shall I again behold you at the head of my master's family, who (thank God!) has got the better of all his troubles, and has a fine fortune to bestow on you."

Miss Roberts was much affected at this honest fellow's repeated marks of his strong attachment: he had lived with the General before his marriage. Emma assured him she was glad to see

him in good health, and much obliged to him for the joy he evinced at her return to her native country. She inquired of James, if he had heard from her father since he left home.

"No, Madam," replied he; "but I left his Honour the General tolerable well; who desired to hear from you the moment you landed: and I have no fears about him, as I gave great charge to Betty, whom we brought from the cottage in Wales; she is an excellent nurse, and understands all about his Honour."

Betty and the Welch cottage were quite an enigma to her; but she made no inquiries. They had now reached the

the inn; and Emma, who had not suffered from sea sickness, immediately wrote a few lines to her father, informing him she should leave Dover the next morning, and hoped in four days she should have the pleasure of embracing him. She mentioned that she was much gratified by his kind attention in sending Ward for her, and the care he had taken to arrange every thing to render her journey comfortable: she likewise said that she received great satisfaction at finding honest James at Dover, who was the same grateful worthy creature he had ever been. She told him she had availed herself of his permission of bringing over an attendant; that she was an English orphan; and when he heard her story, she had no

doubt but he would approve of what she had done, and find himself much interested in her favour. Emma concluded by assuring the General she was impatient to convince him in person of her unabated affection, and to prove to him it had not been the least diminished by absence.

The next day brought them at an early hour to London, where Fanny again testified her astonishment at all she saw. They slept at the hotel in ——; and pursued their journey at the break of day.

The close of the third day brought them in sight of Upton Hall, which was situated on an eminence a few miles from

from Plymouth: it stood at the end of a large park; the approach to it was through a long avenue of venerable oaks, intermixed with fine large limes of a more modern growth. The house was large, and in the gothic style; it commanded from the back front a distant but an extensive view of the ocean; the pleasure grounds were beautifully romantic,

Where woods, grots, temples, lawns, promiscuous
rose,
And Nature vied with Art to deck the scene.

It was superbly furnished in the same taste as the building. Emma's mind was too much agitated with the approaching meeting to pay any attention to the picturesque scenery that sur-

rounded her on every side: she tried to be collected, and in some measure succeeded.

The General observed the chaise enter the avenue, and starting up, traversed the saloon with great perturbation, till the carriage stopped at the great entrance; he then almost flew down the steps, forgetting his crutch stick and his lameness; the servants were just in time to prevent his falling, and letting down the step, Emma was in a moment in the arms of her father, who received her with the greatest affection; but his emotions were almost too much for him, nor was his daughter's less agitated. As soon as she could speak, she said—

" Is it possible, am I indeed so blest, my father? after so long an absence, am I restored to your affections?"

" Forgive, my child, my generous injured Emma, forgive me," was all the General could utter.

At length tears relieved them both, and they were sufficiently composed to enter the house; but the General was obliged to have the support of his crutch stick and James's arm to ascend the steps. Having conducted Emma into a most superb and elegant drawing-room, he again pressed her in his arms and welcomed her to Upton Hall, saying—

"My dearest Emma, I know not what reparation I can make you for many years of undeserved suffering; but in order to explain the motives of my seeming cruelty and total neglect, I must enter into a detail of circumstances you are ignorant of: but as the recital will cost me some pangs, I entreat your patience till to-morrow: you require refreshment and rest."

Emma begged the General would not think of gratifying her curiosity till he found himself equal to the task. At this instant honest James brought in candles: he exclaimed—

"I believe your Honour in the joy of seeing my Lady has quite forgot to

order tea and coffee, so I have made bold to get it ready: Mrs. Ward is putting every thing to rights in Madam's apartment."

"Apropos," said the General, "where is the little English girl that you have taken under your protection, whose story you mentioned in your letter would interest me?"

Miss Roberts told James to desire Fanny to come to her—

"I think, Sir," continued she, "you will approve of what I have done in taking charge of this young creature; her little history at some future period I will relate."

The General assured Emma of his entire approbation. Fanny now entered, and, blushing, curtsied to the General.

"Come hither, my good girl," said he, "be not so timid; in me you shall ever find a friend, who will add his protection to that of his daughter. I would, Emma, give Ward particular charge to instruct Fanny in every thing that is necessary for her to learn."

"I mean, Sir, to place her immediately under her care, as I think her a well-educated worthy woman."

The General asked Fanny how she liked England, and if she was pleased

with

with her situation? She replied, she was quite delighted with what she had seen of it; and that in regard to her situation, she could not fail of being happy in it, honoured as she was with his friendship and that of her beloved mistress, the continuation of which she should make it her study to deserve. After some more questions from the General, who was much pleased with her modest and sensible answers, Emma gave Fanny some orders, who left the room quite charmed with the kindness of her master.

The General then entered into conversation with his daughter relative to her journey and various subjects, which

lasted

lasted till supper. At eleven the General wished Emma a good night.

"God bless you, my dear child; I trust I shall meet you to-morrow in health; believe me I long to inform you of events long past, which I wish ever after to consign to oblivion."

CHAP. II.

EMMA was much pleased with her apartment, which consisted of a large dressing-room and bed-chamber, elegantly fitted up and furnished, though quite in the gothic style. Within her bed-room was a smaller one for Fanny.

Miss Roberts soon dismissed her young attendant: being fatigued she retired to rest immediately, which she

enjoyed till the rays of the morning sun awoke her; and being sufficiently refreshed, she arose and dressed herself without disturbing Fanny who was still asleep. It being only six o'clock, she determined to amuse herself in taking a view of the grounds till the breakfast hour, to which she was induced by the delightful and extensive prospect from her window, which was bounded by the ocean.

Emma descended the great stairs, and entered the grand saloon, which having examined, she perceived a small door that led by a flight of steps into a large shrubbery, in the middle of which, on a rising ground, stood a temple dedicated to the Muses; it consisted of a

spacious

spacious lofty apartment divided into nine compartments, in each of which, on a pedestal, stood a statue of a Muse highly finished in white marble; a table stood under it, on which were placed proper books and implements for the attainment of the different sciences. The cieling was a painted one, finely executed; the subject, Minerva, as the goddess of wisdom, conducting a train of young people of both sexes through the path of knowledge to the temple of Fame, which appears in the back ground. Minerva points to the figure of Time, who has discovered to Britannia various arts and sciences, which she has already laid open to Europe, Asia, Africa, and America: Britannia is attentively looking at Time, who is breaking the seal of

a box

a box containing arts and sciences not yet revealed. Miss Roberts was enchanted with the temple, she promised herself to spend many hours in a place where she found not only amusement but instruction.

The breakfast bell reminded her it was time to seek her father, whom she found waiting for her, and much recovered from the agitation of the preceding evening. He observed with pleasure Emma's looks bespoke her mind at ease.

As soon as they had finished their repast, the General led her to the library, which was fitted up in a superb style: a large collection of well-chosen books

in different languages were arranged in perfect order, in elegant book-cases. The General said—

"I perceive, my dear, you are evidently surprised at the uncommon magnificence, blended with exquisite taste, that surrounds you: it is necessary I should give you an idea of the late owner: Mr. Roberts was a man of literature, of which he was an enthusiastic admirer; but of a most eccentric turn of mind: for the last forty years he had excluded himself from society, and dedicated his time to study and embellishing Upton Hall, which he rendered the admiration of all that saw it; the beauty of the grounds, in which nature and art combine, bespeak the romantic turn of

the

the late possessor. The traveller could not flatter him more than by requesting to view it; a servant was kept on purpose to shew it; the rights of hospitality were strictly attended to, refreshments of every kind were provided, and the stranger was allowed to spend the whole day in gratifying his curiosity. Mr. Roberts never appeared, but shut himself up in his apartment, which is situated in the left wing, and consists of a bed-chamber, eating-room, and study, fitted up in the most simple manner. This extraordinary man was of the most philanthropic disposition; his charities, both public and private, were unbounded, his manners the most polished, his understanding the most refined and highly cultivated, his temper placid; yet

did

did he entirely exclude himself from an admiring world; no cause appeared, nor did he ever assign a reason why he shunned mankind. He reached the great age of ninety-eight, and enjoyed his faculties to the last; his health and strength did not fail him till within three months of his death, when he sought me out, who am a distant branch of the family, and the only relative in existence. He died lamented by all who had ever heard of his name, and by none more sincerely than myself. I informed Mr. Roberts of every circumstance of my life, and entreated his permission to send for you; he replied—

'A very short time will terminate my existence; you will then be the

owner

owner of all I possess, and I have no doubt you will make every retribution in your power for your past unkindness to your injured and amiable daughter; at present I beg you will let matters rest as they are.'

" —But enough of this subject—it is time, my dear, I should perform my promise, and begin my painful task.

" On the death of your ever-lamented mother, (which you recollect happened just as you had entered your fifteenth year,) for a long time I remained inconsoleable, and, but for your filial attention, should have sunk under my loss. I that time placed my whole dependence of comfort on you; the likeness you

bore

bore your mother, both in person and disposition, endeared you to me more than ever; and when the first violence of my grief was over, and I could enjoy your society, my mind became tranquil, and I was thankful to Heaven which still had left me such a treasure.

" Two years you may remember past happily; you improved daily, and more than answered my fondest expectations. Henry, who was then at Oxford, at the vacations, added to our enjoyments by his society. He too was making a rapid progress in his studies, and promised to be an ornament to the human race [an involuntary sigh escaped Emma, nor was the General unmoved; but after a minute's pause he continued].

" It was just after Christmas in the year 17—, that business of consequence called me to London: I left you with the greatest regret; you too were much affected at this parting, though I did not intend being absent above two months.

" On my arrival at the capital, which I had not visited since I lost your mother, I was recommended to lodge and board with a widow of the name of Benson, who resided at the west end of the town. She was near thirty, well educated, pleasing in person, and of the most fascinating manners: she appeared open and ingenuous, but was artful and designing.

She

" She soon by her attention ingratiated herself in my favour. Of an evening she had constantly card parties; I was invited to join the set; at first I objected, as I found they played high; but at last was prevailed on. I lost considerably the first evening, and spent a restless night.

" The next morning brought me a letter from you; in it you anticipated the pleasure of our meeting, which (you added) you expected daily. This awakened all my affection, and I resolved to leave town immediately, as my business had been finished some time.

" On going down to breakfast, I mentioned my intention of setting off the

following morning for Belle-Vue. Mrs. Benson burst into tears, and entreated I would not leave her.

"It is needless to recapitulate the arts this worthless woman made use of to detain me. Alas! at that time she had a powerful advocate in my heart; for, with shame I own it, I was no longer master of my actions; so completely had she entangled me in her snares, that her will was my law, I forgot your angel mother and the sacred pledge she had left to my care. A connection soon took place, which proved my ruin; her extravagance knew no bounds; gaming now becáme my constant evening's amusement.

"You

"You began to be alarmed at my long absence; but young and inexperienced as you then were, I easily quieted your fears by pretending I was still detained on business. Your letters were daggers to my heart; I felt, though I had deviated from rectitude, I was still a father; this woman could not entirely divest me of natural affection, though she certainly weakened it.

"My faithful James often expostulated with me, but I was deaf to his well-meant remonstrances. One day in particular he ventured to hint that Mrs. Benson would be my ruin; this irritated me, and I sternly bid him leave the room, and never dare resume the sub-

 ject.

ject. The poor fellow obeyed this harsh command with tears in his eyes.

"Thus things went on for some months, till I was roused from my infatuation by receiving an anonymous letter, telling me I was a dupe to a set of sharpers, and an abandoned woman who was in league with them, and shared the spoils. Every action of her life was laid open to me, and I was desired to meet the writer, at eight in the evening, at the Shakspeare Tavern, Covent Garden, and inquire for A. Z.

"So much was I agitated, it was with difficulty I composed myself to attend dinner. The syren met me with her accus-

accustomed smiles; and whether she thought I had some suspicions, she strove to amuse me, and displayed all her blandishments; but in vain, the film had fallen from my eyes, and she now appeared in her native colours.

" As soon as coffee was over, I rose to go to my appointment; she urged me to remain, as she said I should be expected at the card-table. I coldly told her I had particular business which would detain me till a late hour, and begged the party would not wait. Bowing, I left the room and hastened to my appointment.

" To my very great astonishment, I found Sir William Maynard waiting for me: I became acquainted with him

at

at Lord B—'s, at whose house we frequently met. He politely apologised for the liberty he had taken, but his motive, he trusted, would plead his excuse. I told him I considered him as my best friend, and entreated he would inform me of every particular, and how he came to the knowledge of some circumstances he had mentioned.

"He then entered into a long detail it would be useless to repeat; suffice to say he laid open such a scene of villany which even at this distance of time makes me shudder; the proofs he brought were undeniable, and I found the woman who had made me a slave to her caprice, ruined my fortune, and caused me to neglect my child, was a

common

common prostitute, instead of the widow of a respectable man.

"I asked Sir William what could be done, as I had lost large sums at play, and was considerably in debt. He advised me to leave town as soon as possible, and on no account return to my lodgings, but empower him to discharge them, and to order my trunks and servant to the Hummums. I accepted his offer, and the next morning wrote a line to my faithful James, telling him to come to me immediately with my baggage, and not to let Mrs. Benson know where I was.

"The poor fellow was overjoyed to find me safe, as he had been much

alarmed at my staying out all night. He told me he had left Sir William and Mrs. Benson at high words. She swore my things should not go out of her house. He told her at her peril to detain them; and ordered James to take a coach, put my trunks in, and go as directed.

"It was near seven in the evening before Sir William came. He said he had with difficulty settled my affairs with that infamous woman: he was forced to use threats, and to tell her he would bring her to a severe account for the fraudulent manner she had obtained of me large sums, and shared the spoils with a set of sharpers who had cheated me at play. He insisted on her sending

for

for two of her accomplices, who had my bond for six thousand pounds. He convinced them he was acquainted with their real characters, and no stranger to the various frauds they had practised on me. In short, he made them give up the bond on paying them a thousand pounds. And Mrs. Benson's bill, which was enormous, he reduced to two hundred pounds, for which he made her give a receipt in full of all demands.

"I thanked this generous friend for his kindness. His friendship did not stop here; I was greatly in debt to different tradesmen, and had sold out all my property in the funds; even your mother's fortune, which was settled on you. I had still honour enough not to touch

Henry's little property, which was all that escaped the general wreck.

"In a few days matters were finally settled, and we set off for Belle-Vue. As I drew near my own peaceful abode, I could scarce conceal the violence of my feelings; I longed, yet dreaded to see you. On our arrival, the affectionate manner in which you received me, and the joy that beamed in your expressive countenance, quite overcame me, and I fainted. Your kind assiduity restored me, but how painful were my sensations on hearing your artless expressions of filial love! Sir William endeavoured to calm your agitations by assuring you I only required rest, as my impatience to see you had made me pursue the jour-

ney

ney with too great rapidity for my strength.

" Under pretence of taking some repose, Sir William led me to my apartment, where he exerted every argument friendship and good sense could suggest to inspire me with fortitude. At length he so far succeeded, that at dinner I was able to meet you with composure.

" A week or ten days passed, which were employed in concerting plans for my future mode of life ; but we could not fix on an eligible one. Yet it was necessary to come to a speedy determination ; I had nothing left but my half-pay and the small estate of Belle-Vue,

 and

and owed Sir William upwards of five thousand pounds: yet he would not hear of my making any reduction in my household, or any alteration in my usual style of living.

"I told him I could not trespass further on his kindness. He replied, that he was the person obliged, and ere long he hoped to be my debtor, as I had it amply in my power to repay any little act of friendship he had been so happy as to render me. He instantly changed the subject, nor could I get him to renew it.

"I thought I perceived he was particularly attentive to you, and found he sought every opportunity to pay you the

the most flattering compliments; yet, as I had made him acquainted that a mutual attachment had subsisted between you and Henry, I had no idea of his intentions towards you, or that you had made an impression on him which in the end proved the bane of our happiness.

"One morning, Sir William had been saying a profusion of fine things to you, and was all animation and gaiety. James brought me a letter from Henry, which mentioned his intention of passing a few days with us in the course of the month; this part I read aloud; your too expressive eyes spoke the feelings of your heart. Sir William was at that instant admir-

admiring a drawing from nature you had just finished; he changed colour, his coutenance was distorted by passion, and he abruptly quitted the room. This circumstance alarmed me; you were too intent on making inquiries after Henry, to remark this extraordinary behaviour. In less than a quarter of an hour Sir William returned, perfectly placid and in apparent good humour: he was rather thoughtful and absent for some little time, but soon recovered that suavity of manners for which he was remarkable; never had I seen him more agreeable. I entirely forgot the occurrence of the morning: I was therefore much surprised when on the following day, after breakfast, he

entered

entered my study, and after some general conversation, addressed me nearly as follows:

" 'The approbation you have ever honoured me with, and the partial light you have beheld the trivial acts of friendship I have been so happy as to render you, to which I will add, your knowledge of my character and fortune, induce me to hope I shall not only have your consent to what I am going to propose, but, if necessary, I flatter myself I shall find you a warm advocate in my favour.'

" I assured him he had a right to command me in every thing, except—I meant

meant to say, the disposal of your hand; but he stopped me by saying—

" 'Hear me out: in short, my friend, the only recompence I ask, the only one I will receive, is the hand of your lovely daughter.'

" Involuntarily I started.

" 'I am aware,' continued Sir William, 'of your objections: the difference of our years; you will likewise urge Emma's attachment to Henry: these are obstacles I am sensible I have to surmount; yet I think I shall, with your assistance, overcome them. Hear my proposal: I will cancel your bond, and

and settle on Emma a sum equal to her mother's fortune, which I think you mentioned was ten thousand pounds. I will also exert my interest with the Minister to procure you a lucrative employment, and nothing shall be wanting on my part to make you and Miss Roberts happy. In regard to her affection for Henry, I look on it merely as a childish affair, and has in it more of friendship than love. As they have never solicited your approbation, you cannot plead a breach of promise. Consent then, my friend, to bestow your daughter upon me, and by so doing you will insure our mutual felicity.'

" In short, my dear Emma, he made use of every argument his passion suggested,

gested, now and then pointing out (though with extreme delicacy) my dis tressed situation, and the fatal consequence that must arise from his withdrawing his friendship; and dwelt in the most forcible manner on what would be your feelings on being acquainted with the real state of my affairs.

"It is needless to say he at length prevailed, and I consented to my child's unhappiness. I promised to exert my authority over you, and to break off all connection between you and Henry; to whom I wrote immediately, acquainting him that you had accepted the offer of Sir William Maynard, and that the marriage would take place in less than a month. Sir William had procured Henry

a very

a very advantageous situation in the East Indies, and promised always to be a friend: by his advice I told Henry the appointment had been obtained through the interest of a friend of his father. I said, as he was so near being of age, I begged leave to resign my trust, and had desired Mr. Seward (my agent) to settle accounts with him; and I flattered myself he would find I had been a faithful guardian of his property. I lamented that we could not have the pleasure of seeing him at Belle-Vue before his departure; as the ship would sail in less than a week, he would scarcely have time to arrange his affairs. I concluded with assuring him of my parental regard, and that you joined me in most affectionate wishes;

and

and hoped we should hear from him as often as the distance would permit.

" I had it announced in all the papers, that a union between you and Sir William Maynard was on the tapis, and would certainly take place as soon as the settlements, equipages, and jewels were ready, which were to be executed in the most brilliant style.

" The return of post brought me a letter from Henry, avowing his passion for you, and entreating me to sanction it: he beseeched my pardon for not having sooner solicited my consent, which nothing but the smallness of his fortune had prevented; and as I had ever treated him with the greatest indulgence, he flattered

flattered himself he should be forgiven, and that I would not persist in forcing you into an union he could not believe you would ever consent to. His letter to you I opened, and found you had plighted your vows during my residence in London. It is needless to say I suppressed it, and prevented your writing to him.

"Believe me, my Emma, my conduct gave me severe pangs: but what could I do? my folly had put me entirely in the power of Sir William Maynard; who too late I found was not the disinterested friend I thought him: he had seen you by chance the summer before our acquaintance commenced, during an excursion he had made in Kent, and determined

termined to ask my permission to address you.

"He applied to Mr. Seward to introduce him, who you remember was on an intimate footing with Henry, and the confidant of his attachment. Mr. Seward assured Sir William that your heart had long been engaged to the most worthy of men, and he had no doubt of my consenting to the union; and urged so many arguments of the impossibility of succeeding, that Sir William seemed to be convinced, and left the country without taking any steps to be introduced at Belle-Vue.

But meeting me frequently at Lord B—'s, he renewed his intentions, and

assi-

assiduously courted my friendship. He was perfectly acquainted with the character of Mrs. Benson, and traced with an attentive eye my progress to ruin.

"It is useless to dwell on the many persecutions you suffered; your unshaken constancy and fortitude astonished me. Sir William grew impatient, and pressed me to use every argument to bring you (as he termed it) to a sense of your duty.

"I blush to think that interest prevailed over parental affection, and trusting to the natural mildness of your disposition, I had no doubt of prevailing on you to marry Sir William. I little knew the strength of my Emma's mind, or

the

the resolution she was capable of maintaining in a just cause.

“ At length Sir William was so ungenerous as to insist on my using force. This touched me to the quick, and I answered with asperity, that I had already gone too far to oblige him, and that if he had the least generosity he would long since have desisted from urging me to render my child miserable.

“ He retorted in a manner that roused every spark of pride; high words ensued, and he left the house in a rage, vowing vengeance against me.

“ My ruin was now inevitable: I could not prevail on myself to inform

you

your of my situation. Stung with remorse, and almost deprived of my reason, I resolved to send you to a convent till I could retrieve my affairs. Never shall I forget your behaviour in the trying moment of separation, nor the ready acquiescence you paid to my commands.

" The instant you were gone I gave loose to my feelings, and for some days I was incapable of taking the necessary steps for repaying Sir William, which I determined to do immediately. My faithful James's kind attentions in some measure calmed the agitation of my mind, and in about a week I was sufficiently composed to proceed to business.

 I sold

" I sold Belle-Vue, my plate, furniture, and even your mother's jewels, by which I obtained the sum of seven thousand pounds and upwards. I sent my attorney to Sir William, and paid the bond with interest; I likewise discharged the debts due to my tradesmen, and dismissed all my servants excepting James, who would not leave me.

" On finally settling my affairs, I found I had only twelve hundred pounds left, which I placed in the bank, and resolved, after paying your pension and the very small stipend I allowed you for clothes and other expensives, to let it accumulate for your benefit.

" I retired

"I retired on my half pay to a cottage with a few acres of land, situated near Conway. I furnished it in the plainest manner; my only attendants were James, and a strong Welch girl to do the household work, attend our little dairy, feed the poultry and pigs. James cultivated our little garden.

" Deprived by my folly of the society of my dearest Emma, I continued to drag on life, till my late relative made inquiries after me, and sent for me; the result of which you are already acquainted with. Believe me I was not the inattentive parent I seemed: the good Lady Abbess under whose protection I placed you had been in the early part of life your mother's most

intimate friend; by her I was minutely informed of every circumstance relative to you, and had the pleasure of hearing you had regained your spirits, that your health was good, and that you appeared happy. Let me hope you will pardon my past conduct; impute it, my dear child, to the weakness of human nature."

Emma embraced her father, and assured him she was too sensible of her present felicity ever to bestow a thought on the past.

At this moment James entered, and giving his master a significant look, said—

"Please

"Please your Honour, Mr. Seward is arrived."

The General turned to Emma, saying—

"I have some business which will engage me till dinner; I shall then introduce Mr. Seward, my agent, to you, whom you have often heard me mention, and frequently seen when a child: in the mean time I wish you to examine my household, and make what additions you think necessary; I have prepared them to receive your orders, and henceforth to consider you as the mistress of this mansion. Johnson the house-steward, and Ward, will give you every information you may require."

Emma instantly retired, saying he should be obeyed. The General told James to present his compliments to Mr. Seward, and say he wished to see him in the library.

" Ah, Sir," cried James, (no longer able to contain himself,) he brings rare good news; Mr. Millward is found, and will be at Upton Hall in a few days, nay in a few hours, if your Honour approves of it."—(He was going on expressing his joy, but suddenly correcting himself, said)—" I hope your Honour will pardon me, for I dare say you are as impatient as myself to know all about it.. I will run directly and deliver your message."

Without waiting for an answer, James flew to Mr. Seward.

"Come, Sir, come with me; the coast is clear; Madam Emma has left his Honour, who waits for you in the library."

The General was sincerely glad to see Mr. Seward; and, shaking him by the hand, said—

"I am heartily rejoiced to see you, my old friend; it is many years since we met: accept my best thanks for your readiness to oblige me, and for the trouble you have taken in travelling so many miles to be the bearer of good news; for I gathered enough from

 James's

James's exclamations of joy to find that you have succeeded in tracing my dear Henry."

Mr. Seward assured the General, that the pleasure of meeting was reciprocal; and most sincerely congratulated him on his accession of fortune, and on having received his daughter safe, and once more enjoying her society. After a few more compliments, Mr. Seward informed the General, that on receiving his letter he went immediately to Mr. Millward's agent, where he heard that he had been arrived in England about six months, and after settling his affairs, set off on a visit to his friend Mr. Steward, who had been married some years, and settled near Milford Haven.

"As I happened to be at leisure," continued Mr. Seward, "I thought the best way of executing your commission was to deliver your explanatory letter to himself. Accordingly I set off, and reached Milford Haven on the evening of the third day. I found Mr. Steward's estate was about three miles off. After breakfast the next morning, just as I had ordered my chaise, two gentlemen with servants stopt at the inn (which was the post-office) to inquire for letters. I instantly recollected Mr. Millward, who, excepting a more manly appearance, was very little altered. I stept out, and calling him by his name, asked if he remembered an old friend. He looked at me for a moment, and exclaiming—

'Is it possible!'

"Dismounted, and shaking me by the hand, assured me this unexpected meeting gave him great pleasure. I told him, though unknown to Mr. Steward, I was going to take the liberty of calling on him at Croft Lodge, as I had some intelligence that I flattered myself would give him pleasure. I requested they would favour me with their company for an hour. They consented. Mr. Steward politely said, he hoped I would give him the pleasure of my company as long as I remained in that part of the country. I thanked him, and said I should avail myself of his kind invitation, but I proposed setting off for London the next day. I

then

then told Mr. Millward that I came from a very great friend of his, and had a pacquet for him. On presenting it, he looked at the subscription, and changed colour.

' Am I awake?' cried he; does General Roberts remember there is such a being as myself in existence?'—(Then recovering, he said)—' May I ask how Lady Maynard is? is she well, and happy?'

" I told him, I had not the honour of knowing her Ladyship. He was much agitated, and said—

' Not know Lady Maynard, the daughter of General Roberts!'

 " I an-

" I answered, Miss Roberts is still unmarried. She rufused Sir William, who in the course of a few months was united to another lady. Never was astonishment equal to his. Open the letter, my dear Sir, the contents will unravel the mystery: as it will take a considerable time to read the detail, if Mr. Steward will give me his company, I will take a view of the beauties of the surrounding country. Mr. Steward acquiesced; and after a delightful walk, we returned to the inn, just as Mr. Millward had finished your narrative."

' Congratulate me, Steward,' cried he, ' my Emma never was false; she will still be mine. Oh! what years of unhappiness had been saved, had the General

neral thought me worthy of his confidence. His story has affected me greatly, you must read it, my friend, I have leave to communicate it to you. How much am I obliged, Mr. Seward, by your taking this journey. Ah! had I known the General's misfortunes, had I known the persecutions my Emma suffered for my sake! How could I for a moment doubt her constancy! how much have I injured that angelic woman.'

" Mr. Steward and myself sincerely partook of his joy. It was some time before he was perfectly composed. Mr. Steward proposed our setting out for Croft Lodge, as it was near his dinner hour, and he feared Mrs. Steward would

be

be alarmed at their long absence, having only designed to take a short ride, and his horse was rather unruly. As Henry had many questions to ask, we agreed to go in my chaise, and send the servants and horses before us.

"On our arrival I was introduced to Mrs. Steward, who is a very accomplished and amiable woman, and though not a perfect beauty, is truly pleasing and interesting. After a dinner served with elegance and in the true style of Welch hospitality, three fine boys and a lovely little girl made their appearance. Though I am an old bachelor, I found much pleasure in contemplating this scene of conjugal felicity, and regretted I could not accept their kind invita-

invitation of passing a few weeks with them.

"The house, the pleasure-grounds, bespoke the taste of the owners, and their well-regulated household; and the happiness that beamed in the countenances of their tenants and the cottagers, impressed me with the highest opinion of their character.

"Mr. Millward was all impatience to commence his journey; it was settled we should set out in two days. We travelled with expedition, but were detained by business a week in London.

"We arrived at —— last night. I left Mr. Millward at the inn till he re-

ceives

ceives your orders, as he did not know whether Miss Roberts was arrived from France, or if you had prepared her for the interview."

It was agreed that the General should in the course of the afternoon inform Emma of every particular.

The dinner bell reminded them it was time to dress, which they soon dispatched, and joined Emma in the drawing-room, who welcomed Mr. Seward with politeness as her father's friend. She was in good spirits, and the General uncommonly cheerful.

The conversation during dinner turned on news and politics. As soon as

the desert was placed on the table and the servants withdrawn, the General said—

"My dearest Emma, I trust I yet have it in my power to recompense you for your past sufferings, and render you happy. Say, my child, is not Henry still dear to you? My worthy friend brings good news relative to him."

Emma was confused, but recovering herself quickly, said—

"It would indeed make me happy to hear of Henry. I do not wish to dissemble; he retains the same place in my affections he ever did; but the years that have elapsed since we met, the various

rious scenes he has been engaged in, and, above all, the ill opinion he must have entertained of my conduct towards him, which certainly appeared in the light of a most finished coquet, with which idea he left England; I cannot therefore flatter myself that I am still remembered by him, at least with any degree of esteem."

"Then, Madam," replied Mr. Seward, "you wrong him: whatever ill impressions your supposed marriage with Sir William Maynard might occasion are entirely done away; he knows you are still Miss Roberts, and only waits yours and the General's permission to convince you that his affection is not the least abated."

Emma desired to be informed of particulars: Mr. Seward briefly related them. She heard him with visible agitation; as soon as she was sufficiently composed, she turned to her father and said—

"You have indeed, my dear Sir, rendered my felicity complete. Where is Henry? Do send for him immediately, I am not collected enough at present to write, will you send a few lines to him?"

The General rang for his writing materials, and ordered a groom to be in readiness to set off for ——. In less than a quarter of an hour the note was ready;

ready; it merely contained a request to see him at Upton Hall as soon as possible, where he was most anxiously expected.

CHAP. III.

We will leave the trio to amuse themselves in surveying the beautiful grounds of Upton, and follow the messenger to the inn at ——, where Mr. Millward was counting the minutes till his arrival. He had fallen into a retrospection of his past life, which it may not be improper to give the Reader a sketch of.

He

He was the orphan son of a Lieutenant in the same regiment as General Roberts, between whom a friendship subsisted that had commenced at a very early period of their lives.

He lost his mother while an infant, and his surviving parent was mortally wounded at the battle of——, and only lived long enough to entreat the General's protection for his darling boy, and that he would be the guardian of his little fortune. The General promised to be a father in every respect to the young Henry, who had just entered his tenth year.

"Mrs. Roberts," said he, "will receive

ceive him as a son, and my little Emma will love him as a brother."

These assurances rendered the closing scene of the Lieutenant's life calm, and he resigned his breath in the arms of his friend with that resignation and composure that ever attends a life well spent.

The General severely felt his loss: he had himself received a wound in the same engagement in his hip, which confined him some months. As soon as he could bear the journey and voyage, he returned to England for better advice.

Mrs.

Mrs. Roberts met him at Portsmouth. They travelled by easy stages to London. The wound was soon healed, and he recovered his health; but a lameness and contraction which could not be removed obliged him to quit the service on half pay. He retired with his family to Belle-Vue.

Henry was sent to Eton, where he continued till he was sixteen; he was then removed to Oxford, as the General determined to give him a liberal education. He was a fine manly boy, of uncommon abilities, and possessed a most excellent heart, and great sweetness of temper. He loved the General and Mrs. Roberts as his parents; and to

Emma he was united by the strictest bands of brotherly affection, which increased with his years, and at length ripened into love.

Never were a family more happy in each other. Both the General and Mrs. Roberts saw with pleasure the growing attachment between their daughter and Henry. Often would the General, when conversing on the subject after the young folks were retired, dwell with pleasure on the future prospect of seeing them united.

"Emma," he would say, "will have a fortune sufficient to render the marriage state comfortable, and to provide for a young family; and Henry's little

fortune is daily improving, as I take care that his expenses do not amount to more than two thirds of the interest. Henry is much devoted to literature, has a taste for music and drawing, and a great turn for agriculture; with these endowments, my wish is to see him an independent country gentleman, and hope he will one day become a senator of these realms, and a supporter of our glorious constitution. Our dear Emma promises to fulfil our most sanguine expectations, nor can we bestow her on one more worthy of her in every respect."

Mrs. Roberts listened with pleasure to these arrangements, which a few years, she thought, would realise. Had

it

it pleased Heaven to have spared the life of this truly amiable woman, all would have been settled according to the General's plan: nor had he the least idea of altering his intentions in Henry's favour, till unfortunately business called him to London, where he fell into the snare of the unprincipled Mrs. Benson, who not only (as has been already related) ruined his fortune, but entirely defeated his project, and rendered two persons formed for the happiness of each other completely miserable for many years.

We left Mr. Millward ruminating on past events, which he continued till he fell into a most profound reverie. The

 arrival

arrival of the messenger from Upton Hall roused him completely: he had no sooner received the pleasing summons, than he ordered his servants to get ready his chaise immediately, and in less than two hours he was in sight of the place which contained the object of his unabated affection.

James was on the look out, and no sooner saw the groom enter the park, than he began capering for joy; and exclaiming—

"Here comes Mr. Millward!" ran to meet him.

He received the hearty, though rough welcome

welcome of the honest fellow, with real pleasure; and returned the shake of the hand with great cordiality.

The party at the Hall were just returned from their walk, and were taking tea and coffee in the drawing-room, which being towards the garden, they did not hear the carriage, or know of Mr. Millward's arrival, till James opened the door, and instead of announcing him, cried—

" Walk in, Sir, pray walk in."

The General, who was standing at the window pointing out a beautiful statue to Mr. Seward, turned suddenly

 round,

round, and in a moment Mr. Millward was in his arms.

The scene that followed was interesting, the meeting of Henry and Emma truly affecting. It was a considerable time before the parties were calm enough to enter into conversation; mutual and heart-felt congratulations then passed; after which the General addressed Mr. Millward as follows:

" I hope, my ever dear Henry, we are friends; and that you found as much to pity as to condemn in my conduct towards you and my dearest Emma. Believe me I have severely paid for my folly, nor can I ever forgive myself for the

the train of misery it occasioned. Heaven has at length put it in my power to atone for the past: I am blessed with an immense fortune, which I prize only as the means to insure the happiness of others: my Henry and my Emma have the foremost claims on me: you both are past the age of romance, but are still young enough to enjoy many years of felicity: receive from my hand, Henry, Heaven's best gift—a virtuous, an accomplished and truly estimable woman. May the all-wise Dispenser of good and evil shower down blessings on my children! may their lives pass serenely on, blessed in each other, and blessing all around them! long, very long may they enjoy every happiness this transitory world can bestow!"

Henry pressed Emma to his heart, who did not attempt to disguise the feelings of hers; it beat in unison with his own. They both expressed their warmest acknowledgments to the good old General. Henry said—

"You have, Sir, amply repaid us for our past sufferings; be it our care to evince the gratitude we feel, by every attention to your wishes that filial affection can suggest."

Mr. Seward wished Henry and Emma joy; they thanked the worthy man for the interest he had taken in their welfare.

The General proposed waving all business till the next day.

"Then," said he, "I will settle every thing relative to your marriage. Let us devote this evening to domestic enjoyments; it is some years since I have felt peace of mind, or any relish for society."

The General's spirits were exhilarated; Mr. Millward's wound up to the highest pitch. The conversation after some time turned on Mr. Millward's affairs: he amused them with several pleasant anecdotes.

"As to adventures," said he, "I have none to relate. I was well received

by the Governor of Madras, and by all the principal people in office. I had the happiness of pleasing my patron, who was the most worthy of human beings.

" I rose very rapidly: the post I held was lucrative; at the end of nine years I found myself master of upwards of sixty thousand pounds, which I had attained with honour.

" On my leaving England, I had resolved never to return to it, nor hold correspondence with any one, my friend Steward excepted; and I made him promise never to mention any thing relative to past occurrences.

" Had

"Had I known, General, that it was through the interest of Sir William Maynard that I obtained my situation, I certainly would not have accepted it; but I thought I was obliged for it to an old friend of my father.

"Mr. Steward pressed me to return to England, and purchase an estate near him. He described in glowing colours the beauty of the situation, and the happiness he should experience in my society: he added, that Mrs. Steward would unite her cares to render me happy.

"At length I complied with his repeated solicitations; and having settled my

affairs in India, and remitted my fortune to my agent, I embarked for my native country. Little did I imagine the felicity that awaited me. On my arrival, I made a short stay in London, and set out for Wales, where I had the pleasure of embracing my early friend, whom I found united to one of the best of women, and surrounded by a family of lovely children: the eldest is my godson, and one of the finest boys I ever saw: he and his two brothers are educated under the eye of their father: the girl is still an infant.

"Here I was witness to conjugal felicity in the highest degree; and though I sincerely rejoiced in the happiness of

my

my friend, a sigh would sometimes escape me when I thought of the treasure I had lost.

"Mr. and Mrs. Steward did every thing in their power to amuse me, and I passed six months with more tranquillity than I had experienced since I left Belle-Vue.

"The morning I unexpectedly met Mr. Seward, I was going to look at an estate about four miles from Croft Lodge, which I had some thoughts of purchasing. This day has obliterated all my past troubles, and made me the happiest of men."

The General proposed passing the time till supper in the music-room, which like the rest of the apartments was fitted up in the most elegant style: the various instruments were in the best order, and finely toned; the ceiling was ornamented with emblematical devices, and different musical instruments; at the upper end a bow window commanded an extensive prospect terminated by hills which appeared cultivated to the top; in a niche on one side stood the Apollo of Belvidere, and on the other St. Cecilia playing on the harp, both finely executed by an eminent Italian artist.

Mr. Millward was an enthusiast in mu-

sic,

sic, and a complete master of the science both in theory and practice, and particularly excelled on the violin. He led Emma to the harpsichord, and placing some charming Scotch music before her, accompanied her on the violin. Emma's voice was perfectly adapted to the plaintive: she sang with exquisite taste several beautiful Scotch airs: Mr. Millward joined her in a favourite Italian duet, rather applicable to their situation; never had they sang in so masterly a style, it was in unison with their feelings, the room too so well suited to the voice. The General and Mr. Seward were delighted, and desired a repetition, with which the concert concluded. As the bell announced, supper was served; the

the happy pair enjoyed the repast; nor did they think of separating till nearly two hours later than the General's usual time of retiring.

CHAP. IV.

SLEEP was for some hours banished from Emma; she lay ruminating on the occurrences which had passed in such rapid succession, and the strange alteration a few weeks had brought about. At length she fell into a slumber, from which she was awoke at an early hour by the melody of the birds.

As soon as she was dressed, she intended to pass an hour or two in the library; but from her window perceiving Mr. Millward in the garden, she instantly joined him: after the compliments of the morning, they entered into an interesting conversation. He found his Emma as beautiful as ever; her person rather improved; and her mind, though well cultivated at the period of their separation, had received an additional polish from time, and the instructions and attentions of the good Lady Abbess. He left her a most lovely and amiable girl, and found her an elagant, fascinating, accomplished woman: she had just completed her twenty-seventh year.

Henry was near thirty; he was finely formed, rather above the middle stature, an animated countenance, and fine expressive eyes: his mind was the seat of every virtue, and he possessed a superior understanding, and the most refined manners.

They strolled over part of the grounds: a serpentine walk led them to a grove of aromatic shrubs, which concealed an elegant Chinese temple, fitted up and adorned with all the luxury of the East: it was hung round with pictures of stained glass, descriptive of the different palaces, amusements, and remarkable places in and near Pekin. The tables, chairs, and sofas were bamboo; the latter had fine chintz cushions

trimmed

trimmed with light green silk fringe, the curtains of the same texture. Æolian harps were placed round the temple; and an aviary filled with various singing birds stood near, but concealed from sight: from the front a foaming cascade was seen at a distance; the back and side views were wildly luxuriant. This charming retreat seemed the work of enchantment.

Mr. Millward and Emma were captivated; but had only time to take a hasty survey of it; as it was near the breakfast hour. On the lawn they met Mr. Seward coming in search of them, as the General was rather impatient for his breakfast.

"Come, Emma," said he, as soon as he had embraced her, "do give us some tea, Mr. Seward and myself are half famished; do you know it is past nine o'clock? but I excuse you, as you must have much to say to each other. Henry, give me your hand, once more welcome to Upton Hall; soon shall you be master of it and its domains. I have not been idle this morning; Mr. Seward has taken my directions, and will set out next week for London to forward the settlements. I have dispatched a note to the rectory requesting the favour of Mr. and Mrs. Montague's company to dinner, as I long to introduce those worthy people to you. The Rector is one of the greatest ornaments of the church, and I am certain you will

be

be pleased with Mrs. Montague. When we have dispatched breakfast, we will proceed to business."

As soon as they had finished their repast, the General led the way to the library. He directly entered on the subject nearest his heart: he began by saying he wished the marriage to take place as soon as a decent time had elapsed from the death of his much regretted relative.

"It is now nine weeks since that event, in less than a month I intend to change mourning; and I think at that period, my beloved children, your nuptials may be celebrated in a private manner, without the least disrespect to the

memory

memory of the deceased. It is now necessary to enter on my future arrangements, which, I trust, you will both approve. The rent roll of the estate, at present a clear ten thousand pounds a year, and still improving without any oppression to the tenants, I mean to resign to you, my children. The personal, which amounts to upwards of fourscore thousand, part of which is in the funds, and the rest out on good mortgages at a legal interest, I shall keep in my own hands, and hope to live to portion the younger branches of your family."

Mr. Millward and Miss Roberts expressed their thanks in the warmest

terms;

terms; at the same time joined in wishing the General to retain the estate.

"Hear," replied the General, "the rest of my propositions: I mean to reside with you during my life: my establishment will not be large; my faithful James, my valet (who is an excellent young man, and had lived four years with my late cousin), a coachman, a postillion, a footman, groom, and Welch Betty, who is an exceeding good nurse, and much attached to me; James and she have long been sweethearts, I would settle them in a farm, but they will not leave me; I therefore intend to have a double wedding, and shall provide for them at my death. I need not recom-

mend

mend to you to adhere strictly to all the plans of the late owner of the estate, of which I will give you a list: one alteration will be necessary for our comfort, which is in regard to the privilege allowed strangers of viewing the Hall and pleasure grounds; I think it should be confined to one day in the week during the summer season; I would wish you on that day to keep an open table. The charitable institutions have sufficient funds appropriated to their use, of which the good Rector has the management."

Henry and Emma assured the General that it should be the chief study of their lives to conform to his wishes in every respect, and to follow, if possible, the

steps of the late Mr. Roberts. Henry asked the General what jointure he should settle on his dearest Emma—

"Any present settlement is needless, as she will ever have my whole fortune at command; I cannot say I approve of separate interests between man and wife; but I beg, Sir, you will name the dower."

The General mentioned four thousand a year, which was instantly agreed to. Henry said—

"I wish, Sir, to consult you and Mr. Seward in regard to the disposal of my property; it consists in India bonds, and about ten thousand pounds in my

banker's

banker's hands. I mentioned my intention of purchasing an estate in Wales, where I determined to set down the rest of my life a churlish old bachelor; but my better stars prevailed, and I have now before me the pleasing prospect of every social enjoyment and domestic bliss."

It was agreed that Mr. Millward should purchase land as near Upton as possible, and divide it in small farms.

"There is," said the General, "a large tract of land to be sold within a few miles of us, which only wants cultivation to render it very profitable; you and Mr. Seward can ride over to-morrow and look at it."

These affairs being settled, they adjourned to the toilette; the duties of which were scarcely finished when Mr. and Mrs. Montague arrived, with whom it may not be amiss to bring the Reader acquainted.

Mr. Montague was descended from a good family, of which his father was the younger branch. He was educated at Eton, where Mr. Roberts and he contracted a friendship which always subsisted: they regularly corresponded.

On the death of Mr. Montague, Mr. Roberts took the youngest son, Edward, his namesake and godson, entirely under his protection, and, with the boy's consent, educated him for the church.

Edward made a rapid improvement in his studies both at school and college, where his philanthropy of disposition, his goodness of heart, and rectitude of conduct, gained him the approbation and respect of all that knew him.

As soon as he was a proper age he entered into orders, and was presented by Mr. Roberts to the living of Upton, which he had enjoyed near thirty years, twenty of which he had been married to Mrs. Montague, who brought him a good fortune; but that in his eyes was of small estimation, compared to her intrinsic merit; she was every way worthy of being the partner of his heart.

They had had a large family, but Heaven thought fit to deprive them of all but two: the eldest, Edward, just turned of nineteen, was at Oxford, as he had chosen the church: the youngest, Louisa, was in her fifth year. Such was the family of this truly worthy man.

The General introduced Mr. and Mrs. Montague to Mr. Seward, his daughter, and his intended son-in-law, who congratulated themselves on this agreeable addition to their society. Before dinner was ended all restraint was banished; and when Mrs. Montague and Emma retired to the drawing-room, they conversed on the footing of old acquaint-

ance.

ance. Emma expressed a wish to see her little Louisa, and hoped in future she would wave all ceremony and bring the child, which Mrs. Montague promised—

"And I expect," said she, "I shall be favoured with Miss Roberts's company often at the Rectory, which was fitted up by our late worthy patron with his accustomed liberality and taste."

Emma assured her she should be happy in taking every opportunity of improving an acquaintance which she already felt would be a great acquisition.

The gentlemen now joined them. After tea Mr. Montague said—

"The evening is remarkably fine; will you take a stroll to the hermitage, and give me leave to introduce you to the hermit?"

They all agreed they should like the excursion exceedingly. Emma feared it would be too far for her father. The General told her he would not be left out of the party, as James should drive him in a garden chair.

They had a delightful walk through the park, at the end of which they entered a thick wood, through which a

road

road was cut that led to the Hermitage.

A wicker gate and a winding gravel walk brought them to the door. On each side was a green bench, over which honeysuckles and woodbines formed an arbour. On the entrance was the following inscription in black and white, written by Mr. Montague's son when a youth scarcely thirteen years of age:

Oh, stranger, welcome to this calm retreat;
And, if dispos'd, I pray thee take a seat.
If grave reflection does inspire thy mind,
Here, quite at ease, a refuge you will find;
All nature hush'd, except the gentle breeze,
And little songsters yonder in the trees.

 If

If precious time will not permit thy stay,
Then kindly deign to call another day.
Retirement's joys I wish thee, with content,
And all the blessings of a life well spent.

The venerable man received them with great politeness, and welcomed them to his cell. Mr. Montague he treated as an old friend, the General with great respect, who introduced Mr. Millward and Emma to him.

They found him a sensible learned man, though he appeared to have little knowledge of the world: he was cheerful, yet a sigh often escaped him; and on the late Mr. Roberts being mentioned, he burst into tears.

"Forgive me, my friends, for intruding my sorrows on you; but they are a tribute of gratitude to the memory of the most exalted of human beings. Oh, what do I not owe him!"

The General begged him to make no apology for feelings that did him honour. To change the subject, Mr. Montague proposed going over the Hermitage: it consisted of the outer room, a bed-chamber, a small chapel, and a study in miniature; the shelves were filled with the best authors in all languages; and the whole was fitted up and furnished with neatness and simplicity: every convenience and comfort were to be found in this little peaceful abode; the garden was well cultivated and laid

out with peculiar taste, a profusion of fine flowers, and well stored with the choicest fruits and vegetables.

On their return from viewing the garden, they found a table spread with fruit, cream, biscuits, and wine. After partaking of the hermit's hospitality, they prepared for their departure.

The General told the hermit, that Mr. Millward and his daughter would in future be his patrons—

" And," added he, shaking him by the hand, " in me you will ever find a friend."

Henry and Emma assured him that they

they would do every thing to contribute to his ease and comfort. The good old man blessed them, tears of gratitude rolled down his furrowed cheeks.

The whole party were affected, and much pleased with the interesting hermit; particularly Emma, whose curiosity was so much excited, that she applied to Mr. Montague for information relative to him.

"His story, Madam, is a melancholy one; if it is your wish, I will relate it this evening."

Emma thanked him, and said she should claim his promise.

As soon as supper was over, Mr. Montague gave the history of the hermit, as will be found in the following chapter.

CHAP. V.

DON CARLOS DE SEVILLE, a Spaniard by birth, at five years of age was placed in the Convent of ——, as he was destined by his parents to be a priest. He was never suffered to pass the walls; his father seldom saw him, and when he did, made his visit very short.

His childhood passed happily; he was a favourite in the Convent, nor did he feel

feel the want of parental attention; the superior of the Convent proved a father and a friend to him. Carlos attained his sixteenth year without having formed a wish beyond the walls of the Convent, or ever having expressed the least dislike to obey the will of his father.

About that period a young nobleman became a pensioner in the Convent, with whom he contracted a strong friendship. Don Claudius (so he was called) visited Madrid twice a year, and on his rerurn constantly related the amusements of the capital, and painted an intercourse with the world in such pleasing colours, that Carlos, who was of a lively disposition, conceived an aversion to a monastic life, which every

day grew stronger and stronger; but fear of offending the superior, made him confine his sentiments to his own breast.

He had not seen either of his parents for above two years; at length his father paid him a visit, when he gained courage, and mentioned the change that had taken place in his sentiments, and entreated to be permitted to enter the army.

Nothing could exceed the astonishment of his father, who told him he could not comply with his request, as his fortune was not equal to his rank; that his four sisters were destined to take the

veil;

veil; and though he practised the strictest economy, he had scarcely sufficient to support his eldest brother, who had just entered the army. Young Carlos entreated and remonstrated in vain; his father sternly told him he must be reconciled to his fate, as it was inevitable; and he must absolutely enter on his novitiate in three months. He frequently during that time received letters from his father, representing to him in the strongest terms the necessity of his complying.

The friars did every thing to induce him to accord with their wishes; and the Abbot, to whom he was fondly attached, exerted all the influence he had

had over Carlos; and, by mildness and indulgence, gained his consent. Before he was twenty he agreed to commence his novitiate, which they took care to render so pleasant, that at the appointed time he took the vows and habit without any degree of repugnance: his parents loaded him with caresses, and the friars spoke highly in his praise. Six years passed in perfect tranquillity; and if the young friar was not happy, he was at least content.

Near the Abbey stood a convent of nuns, of the order of Ursulines, to which Father Edmund (the name he assumed when professed) was appointed confessor.

Among

Among the nuns was a beautiful girl of eighteen, who made no secret that the vows she had taken were forced. Father Edmund had frequent opportunities of conversing with sister Isabel, and he soon found her beauty the least of her attractions: she possessed a great share of wit, and had a peculiar archness in her manner, that rendered her conversation irresistably charming.

A short time convinced them they were not formed for a life of seclusion; a mutual affection took place, and neither had strength of mind to resist the impulse of a passion which proved their ruin.

For some months their conscience was lulled

lulled to sleep, and they continued the guilty intercourse; at length they were awakened from their illusion by sister Isabel being in a situation that threatened destruction to them both. Father Edmund beheld with horror the fatal abyss which opened to receive them, and severely repented his deviation from moral and religious rectitude; nor was Isabel less stung by remorse.

For some weeks after this discovery he was unable to form any plan for their escape; at length he fixed on one—Isabel was to feign illness, in order to be excused attending midnight mass, and beg not to be disturbed in the morning. As soon as the nuns were assembled in the Chapel she was to contrive to get into

into the garden: Edmund had previously procured disguises and a rope-ladder by the means of a poor man, to whom he had rendered an essential service, who was firmly attached to him, and on whose secrecy he could depend.

The community to which Father Edmund belonged retired exactly at eleven, and did not rise till five. As soon as he found all quiet, he got over the garden wall, and arrived at the place of assignation a little before twelve; a few minutes after Isabel gave the appointed signal. Despair inspired them with resolution: he mounted the wall, and flung the ladder over, and Isabel reached the top with safety. He received her in his arms, and conducted her down.

Having

Having gained the outside of the Convent, their first step was to assume the disguise of peasants, which Edmund had procured, and they hid their habits in a deep ditch. Being equipped, they set out on their pilgrimage.

It was a fine moon-light night in the month of October. Fear lent them wings; and for some hours they travelled without stopping.

When morning began to dawn they found themselves at the entrance of a large forest, which they entered. Isabel being quite exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, they determined to seek a place of shelter where they might rest themselves. Edmund had provided a small basket

basket of provisions, containing bread, cold meat, and a couple of bottles of wine.

After some difficulty they found a convenient place, quite out of the beaten path; here they concluded to pass the day. After they had refreshed themselves Edmund prevailed on Isabel to try to sleep, and promised to watch. All remained quiet, and she awoke somewhat recovered.

As soon as the day closed they pursued their journey; uncertain of the course they were taking, and dreading being pursued, or falling into the hands of banditti.

The

The third morning they reached the extremity of the forest, and an open country lay before them, but they dared not venture to pursue their course till night. Their provisions were spent, and Isabel's strength entirely failed her. Edmund was scarcely able to support himself, yet he endeavoured to comfort Isabel; the sufferings she endured both in body and mind proved too much for her, and brought on the pains of labour. Before night she was prematurely delivered of a boy, who only saw the light and expired.

To describe the feelings of Edmund is impossible; they were little short of madness. The place where these unhappy victims of their folly lay con-

cealed was within a quarter of a mile of the road. In this extremity he heard the sound of a carriage and horses; regardless of the hazard he ran, he called aloud for assistance. Isabel had just strength to say—

"You have ruined us!" and fainted.

In a few minutes a gentleman and three servants approached, who were struck with the horrid scene—a dead infant, a beautiful young woman dying in the arms of a man who hung over her with inexpressible anguish.

The stranger ordered one of the servants to fetch a cordial from the chaise, and in the most compassionate

accents

accents addressed Edmund, assuring him of every aid in his power; he poured some of the cordial down the throat of Isabel, who just opened her eyes, pressed Edmund's hand, implored the mercy of offended Heaven, and expired without a groan. Edmund remained the image of despair.

Mr. Roberts (for he was the good Samaritan) was on his road to ——— where he meant to embark for England. He had heard the story of the elopement of a friar and nun, and circumstances made him certain he had met with the unfortunate fugitives. On the fidelity and discretion of his servants he could depend. There was not a moment to be lost, as he knew the strictest search

that he wished to put him immediately under the surgeon's care. The Captain managed to get him on board the packet without any suspicion arising.

The wind being fair, Mr. Roberts followed in less than two hours, and they sailed before evening. The surgeon pronounced Edmund to be in a most dangerous way; a violent fever and delirium ensued: he raved incessantly of Isabel and the child.

For some days his life was despaired of; but youth, a good constitution, the skill of the surgeon, and, above all, the kind attention of Mr. Roberts, restored him to health and to some degree of composure; but a settled melancholy

remained

remained during the voyage. They landed at Plymouth, after a pleasant and quick passage, and directly set off for Upton Hall, from which Mr. Roberts had been absent six years. It was at this period he turned his thoughts on embellishing this charming place, and forming plans for the benefit of mankind.

Mr. Roberts found Edmund possessed of profound learning, quick parts, and a most excellent heart. Mr. Roberts poured the balm of comfort into his wounded mind; for, though he severely condemned the violation of religious vows, he sincerely pitied the fate of two young people sacrificed to the avarice of their parents. Insensibly he led him to

return to the path of religion, and convinced him, by mild arguments, that despair was the most heinous of crimes, and that a contrite heart never implored in vain at the Throne of Mercy.

Edmund became serene, nay even cheerful; his heart glowed with gratitude and veneration for his benefactor; he expressed a wish for retirement, and to devote his life in atoning, by prayer and every means in his power, for his past offences: he dared not join any religious society.

Mr. Roberts suggested the design of building an hermitage, where he might live secluded from the world, and practise the duties of his religion. Edmund

embraced the offer with joy. The spot was soon fixed on, and the hermitage finished, and every thing ready for his reception the ensuing summer. Mr. Roberts insisted on his having a servant to assist him, and settled a hundred a year on him, to dispose of as he thought fit.

It is now forty years since this truly penitent, and I may add pious man, has passed the boundaries of his small domain; he has made physic his study; and, by his skill, has preserved the lives of many of his fellow creatures. The country people adore him, and he is universally respected. About five years ago the hermitage was repaired, and the

inscription placed on it to gratify my son, it being his first production.

Mr. Montague received the thanks of the company for the affecting narrative. Soon after Mr. and Mrs. Montague took their leave; Emma having promised to pay a visit at the Rectory the following morning, and Mr. Montague agreed to accompany the gentlemen on their excursion.

CHAP. VI.

THE family assembled early in order that the gentlemen might have time to survey the intended purchase, and return to dinner.

During breakfast Fanny brought Emma a packet of letters from the Lady Abbess; there was one enclosed for Fanny, who was quite delighted to hear from her respected friend. On her

leaving the room, Mr. Millward observed she strongly resembled a person, of the name of Edwards, who held an office under him in India, to whom he was executor.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Emma, "that is Fanny's name."

Before Mr. Millward could reply, the General reminded her that she had forgot to relate Fanny's story.

"I am much interested in the fate of this little girl, for she is a great favourite of mine."

Emma said she was ready to perform her promise, which nothing prevented

but

but their time having been entirely occupied. Mr. Millward requested the narration might be deferred till his return, as his curiosity was excited. The General consented. Emma said she would pay her visit to Mrs. Montague, and prevail on her to return with her, and spend the day, *en famille*, at the Hall.

As soon as the gentlemen set off, Miss Roberts perused the Abbess's letter, and had the pleasure of finding that excellent woman and all her friends were well. It contained the warmest expressions of friendship and affection, and great anxiety to hear every particular relative to her future destiny. It concluded with inquiries after her darling Fanny, whom she trusted continued the same artless in-

interesting girl, and that her conduct merited her approbation.

Emma answered the kind inquiries of her revered friend immediately, being assured the account of her present situation and future prospects would confer happiness.

Having finished her letter, she sat out for the Rectory, at the door of which she was met by Mrs. Montague, who welcomed her with something more than politeness—with affection, and conducted her to the drawing room, which displayed elegance and simplicity combined; the whole house was fitted up in the same manner. The breakfast-room and study particularly attracted the notice

of Emma; the former was hung with drawings from nature, highly finished: and the latter contained a small but valuable collection of books and manuscripts.

Emma inquired for the little Louisa, who at that instant entered the room running, and exclaimed—

"Oh, my dear mama, I have had such a delightful walk."

She was going on, but perceiving Miss Roberts, she stopped and coloured.

"Come here, Louisa," said her mother, "that is the lady I promised,

if you were a good child, I would intro-duce you to."

Louisa made a courtesy, and without further ceremony jumped in Emma's arms, which were extended to receive her; they soon became the best friends imaginable.

Miss Roberts found the more she conversed with Mrs. Montague, the more she was attached to her. Accus-tomed from her youth to the society of persons rather advanced in life; she was happy to find so entertaining and sen-sible a companion; and Mrs. Montague was equally pleased with the polished manners, the intelligent sweetness of

coun-

countenance, and highly cultivated understanding of Miss Roberts.

After spending an agreeable morning, she returned to the Hall, accompanied by Mrs. Montague and Louisa, whose innocent prattle and infantine gaiety greatly amused Emma. They found the General in the saloon waiting their arrival.

" I have just," said he, " received a note from Henry, desiring we would not wait dinner, for he was so pleased with the situation and soil of the land, that he is determined to conclude the bargain, and begs his and the gentlemen's apology to the ladies."

After

After dinner they amused themselves in the picture gallery, which contained, besides the family portraits, several very fine pictures of sacred and profane history. The gentlemen returned to tea.

Mr. Millward had settled every thing relative to the purchase; and it being necessary for him to go to London as soon as possible, the party agreed to meet the next day at the Rectory, and the following one Mr. Millward and Mr. Seward were to take their departure.

Mr. Berry, the land steward of Upton, received orders to have the land divided into small farms, none exceeding two hundred a year; the greater part fifty and under. Twenty cottages were to

be built, and ground annexed sufficient to feed a cow, with a garden planted with necessary vegetables and roots. Mr. Montague promised to superintend the whole, and to lay the plan of the Upton estate before him, which, if he approved of, he could proceed in the same manner.

Immediately on Mr. Millward's and Mr. Seward's return the marriage was to take place, every thing being finally arranged.

In the evening Mr. Millward begged of Emma to relate Fanny's story; "As I have a great idea she is heiress to the Mr. Edwards I mentioned."

"I will," replied Emma, "satisfy your curiosity immediately. Do us the favour to read this letter aloud; it is the copy of one written by Fanny's father, addressed to the Lady Abbess a few days before his death."

"In order to obey your commands, Madam, I have endeavoured to trace on paper my short but melancholy story.

"I am the son of an opulent woollen-draper of London. Myself and a younger brother received a good education, and were brought up to the business. On the death of my father, which happened in the twenty-third year of my age, we found ourselves masters of a large stock,

an

an extensive trade, and five thousand pounds in money.

" Charles was just of age, of a very dissipated, extravagant turn, nor could all my remonstrances keep him within bounds. I was fondly attached to him; and as he possessed a good understanding and a most excellent heart, I was in hopes to reclaim him by lenity; and that, after he had ran his course of pleasure, I flattered myself he would attend to business.

" At the end of the second year I married a young lady, the orphan of a clergyman, who was endowed with every requisite to render the marriage

state

state happy, except money, and that I did not consider a defect.

"For the first eight years nothing happened but Charles's extravagance to disturb our domestic bliss. My wife had brought me several children, but all, except Fanny, the youngest, were either still-born, or died soon after their birth: at length our affairs took a disagreeable turn; we sustained several severe losses by the failure of two mercantile houses, who were greatly in our debt; and, to add to our misfortunes, our banker, in whose hands we had deposited a large sum to make good a payment which came due in a few weeks, became a bankrupt. I took this opportunity of talking

talking very seriously to Charles, who heard me with attention, and promised amendment.

“ It was agreed that the only expedient we could take to save our credit, would be to solicit our principal customers to pay their bills. On casting up the different accounts, we found we had more on the books than the sum wanted. Charles undertook to collect the money: he succeeded beyond my expectation.

“ Charles had, unknown to me, been drawn in by a set of gamesters, to whom he had lost considerable sums, and was deeply in their debt.

“ Re-

" Returning home with the money he had been collecting, he unfortunately met a Mr. Black, (one of the harpies), who he looked on as his best friend. He told Charles that he would have an opportunity that evening of redeeming his losses.

" Charles imprudently mentioned the business he had been on, and said he would only step to the counting house with the cash, and join him directly.

" 'My dear friend,' said Mr. Black, 'unless you can bring a few hundreds with you, it will be useless to come. You know I am in the same predicament as yourself, and cannot command a guinea. Fortune favours the bold: make

make one essay to extricate yourself from the difficulties you are involved in; defer seeing your brother till to-morrow.'

"Charles hesitated. His conscience revolted at the idea of risking what if lost, must prove my ruin. Mr. Black urged him, by the most delusive arguments; and awakened his fears, by telling him the person who had his note was determined to be paid: at length he prevailed, and they agreed to dine at a tavern.

"Charles, to drown thought, drank freely, while his treacherous friend kept himself perfectly sober. By the time they joined the set Charles was com-

pletely intoxicated, and he fell an easy prey. Before they suffered him to depart they stript him of every shilling.

" He returned to his lodgings in a state of madness; he flung himself on the bed quite exhausted, and fell into a short slumber, from which he awoke in all the horrors of despair.

" In this situation of mind he wrote me an incoherent letter, confessing his crimes, and fixed determination never to see me more. It is easy to conceive my distress on receiving this account. I dreaded the effect it would have on Mrs. Edwards, who had been for some time past in a very languid state; yet long to conceal my situation was impossible.

possible. In three days the bills became due.

"As soon as I could exert myself I made every inquiry after my unhappy brother, but in vain; I never heard of him more. My creditors were clamourous; I gave up my all; and, after appearing to my bankruptcy, I was forced to conceal myself, as two of my principal creditors refused to sign my certificate. A friend generously stepped forward and made a collection, which, with fifty pounds he gave, amounted to two hundred: with this I determined to embark with my wife and child for France. My friend gave me a letter of recommendation to a mercantile house at Boulogne.

"Mrs. Edwards bore the shock better than I expected, and did every thing in her power to keep up my spirits. We arrived at Boulogne safe; but the fatigues of a very bad passage, attended by a dreadful sea sickness, proved too much for the weak state of my wife, and in less than a month she resigned her spotless soul into the hands of her Maker.

"She was sensible and composed to the last, and strongly urged resignation to the fiat of the Almighty, and that I would endeavour to exert myself for the sake of our little Fanny. I strove to obey the request of my beloved wife, but this last blow had struck deep. My child too was a continued source of

affliction—she was her mother in miniature.

"Monsieur De la Ponte, to whom I was recommended, was a very worthy man; he visited me often; and, finding I daily declined, advised me to try the air of Languedoc, and offered to procure accommodation for me at a distant relation's of his, at a small expense; and promised, if I recovered my health, to receive me into his counting house. He advised me to place Fanny in a convent, and spoke so highly of you, Madam, that I resolved to solicit your protection for my child.

"I find myself nearly exhausted, and a few days will, I am certain, terminate

my

my existence. Your benevolence, in promising to take care of my dearest Fanny, and your kindness in assuring me you will comply with my request in regard to her future destiny, leaves not a wish ungratified. May Fanny prove worthy of your patronage, and may her gratitude in some measure repay you for your unexampled goodness in receiving and supporting a destitute little orphan.

" Her unhappy father has nothing to bequeath her but his prayers and blessing: accept the same, honoured Madam, from your most respectful and grateful humble servant,

" JAMES EDWARDS.

" Among

" Among some papers of my poor wife's I found the enclosed lines, written, by the date, a few weeks before her death. If Fanny lives she may value them."—

When fortune frowns how few are friends,
My heart too late is taught;
And each false breast that did pretend,
Now shows their inmost thought.

The world is false; the man is vain
That hopes a joy to know,
From the gay world, that feels no pain,
Nor once has tasted woe.

But let the cheerful hours return,
Again they'll crowd around;
Their hearts with former warmth will burn,
And wonder why you mourn'd.

Such is the state the wretched feels,
That hope to gain a friend;
Unhappiness is the true steel,
False friendship for to end.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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